MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

Government should avoid moral judgments

I think we're overlooking something about the marriage issue. I think the government should get out of the marriage business altogether. Marriage is and always has been two things, but we haven't always looked at it that way. It is a sacrament and a contract. No matter how much the government wants to, it will never be able to grant sacramental status to a relationship. That can only be done by the world's religions.

Enforcing a contract is something that is done by the government at the state and county level. If people want the government to enforce a contract, they should write one. Contracts can be made between any two people as long as both parties are over 18 and neither one was coerced into the contract.

The various religions can have their lawyers draw up standard contracts that are in alignment with their religious beliefs and the American Bar Association can draw up one or two standard contracts for those who are not affiliated with a religion. The contract is about how the union will work. It could include how to dissolve the union and the subsequent disposition of assets and responsibilities, but it's primary function should be how the union will work.

A constitutional amendment about marriage, no matter what it says, is totally inappropriate.

Elizabeth Porter
Peyton

SOLDIER SLAVES?

Supreme Court should rule on constitutionality of orders

The idea of the executive branch of our government not only forcing Americans to fight another nation's battles, but preventing them from returning to their lives beyond the ending date in their contract to serve in the military is an outrage ("Army order keeps soldiers in service / Stop-loss prevents retirement, departure," The Gazette, Dec. 29).

"Stop-loss orders," which keep soldiers in service beyond their contracts, is slavery, not to mention dishonest misrepresentation. The Supreme Court should declare stop-loss orders unconstitutional. To make this happen requires a soldier or family member of a soldier who has been so enslaved to sue the U.S. government. I know we scoff at suits against our own government, but it's the only way certain issues can be heard by the Supreme Court.

We must do a better job of protecting ourselves, and we must stop meddling in the affairs of other governments. That's why America is hated by so many foreign people, which in turn puts us at risk.

We need to stop fighting other nations' battles. If individual Americans want to volunteer to join a mercenary army, or want to donate money to help a military cause, that should be fine. That's much different than forcing us, through our taxes, to support foreign causes.

Let's make America what it should have been, a gleaming example of democracy the rest of the world would seek to emulate.

Marty Joel
Calhan

CAROL LAW

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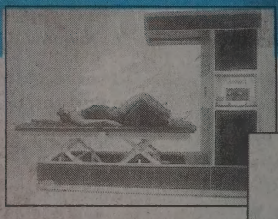

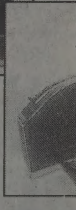

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